

FINE ARTS
DEPARTMENT

Ayutthaya
HISTORIC CITY



Sandstone with carving design from Wat Mahathat.



Gold Buddha images found in the treasure - house of Wat Rajaburana.



Stucco design at Wat Som, dated to early Ayutthaya period.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF AYUTTHAYA

After the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, the new capital cities have been established at Thonburi and then at the present Bangkok. Most of people in Ayutthaya were integrated for relocation in the new capital city while very few were still there.

With reason of the security of the country and the demanding needs for construction materials at Bangkok, the city wall and some of temples in Ayutthaya had been demolished for bricks during the reign of King Rama I to King Rama III of Bangkok.

King Rama IV (King Mongkut: 1836-1868), had planned to rehabilitate Ayutthaya. He commanded to construct new pavilions atop the old ones at the former Front Palace or Chandrakesem Palace. He had also planned to reconstruct the Sanpeth Prasat Pavilion of the old Grand Palace. Unfortunately the second activity was not implemented.

In the reign of King Rama V (King Chulalongkhorn: 1868-1919), he ordered to nationalize and proclaim that every square inches of land on the Ayutthaya island are strictly preserved. Phrayaboran Ratjathanin, the governor of Monthon Khrung Kao at that time, had been empowered and in charge of the commission for survey, excavation and restoration of monuments in the old grand palace of Ayutthaya. This was really the beginning of the preservation activity of Ayutthaya City as historical evidence of the country.

In the year 1932, soon after the reformation for democracy in Thailand, the government promulgated the act to right the Ministry of Finance in all public land in the country, including the terrain of Ayutthaya City.

In 1935, the Fine Arts Department began to register monuments in Ayutthaya.

In 1938, the Ministry of Finance transfer the right of some land parcels in Ayutthaya to private sectors to renewed the abandoned city.

In 1956, the cabinet allocated budget for the restoration and reconstruction Wat Phra Si sanphet, Wat Phra Ram, Wat Phra Mongkhol Bophit and Wat Phukhao Thong etc.

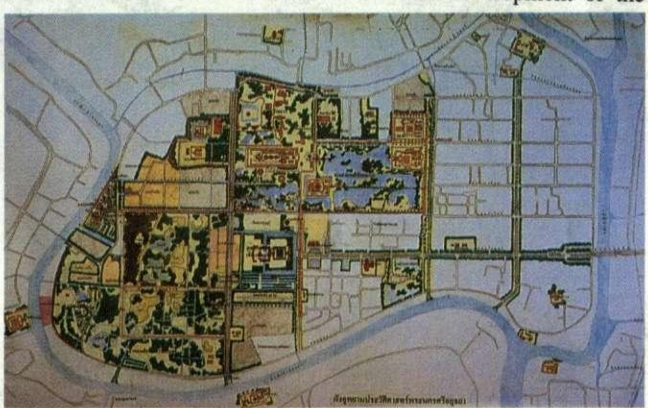
Ten years later, in 1987, the cabinet approved the project proposal for survey, excavation and restoration of monument in the Ayutthaya City and allocate a budget of 1,000,000 baht for the first year activities. The Department for Urban Planning, the Fine arts Department and the Municipality of Ayutthaya cooperated in the implementation.

In 1976, the Fine Arts Department proclaimed and registered an area of 1,810 rais (715 acres) for the monumental boundary.

In 1982, the Fine Arts Department commenced the implementation of the Ayutthaya Historical Park Project.

In 1987, the master plan for conservation and development of the Ayutthaya Historic City had been prepared.

On March 23, 1993, the cabinet of Thailand approved the proposed master plan for conservation and development of the



The landscape plan of Ayutthaya Historic City.

Ayutthaya Historic City and allocated first-year budget for the implementation of the project in 1994.

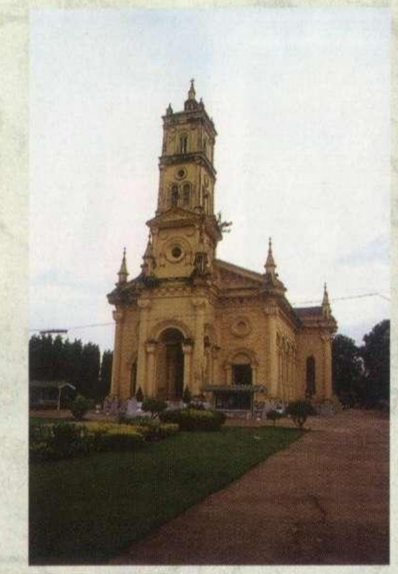
MASTER PLAN FOR AYUTTHAYA HISTORIC CITY

The Fine Arts Department prepared the master plan for the development of Ayutthaya Historical City which covers an area of about 715 acres (1,810 rais), in 1987. The project proposal was formally approved by the cabinet in 1993. Actual appropriations were first forthcoming in the year 1994.

With suggestions from the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the Budget Bureau and the Ministry of Finance, and given the seven-year delay in the implementation of the plan, the Fine Arts Department had to adopt a number of adjustments such that the plan be more in accord with the change and continuing growth of the country. The revision of the plan was accomplished in October 1994, for which a new budget of 2,946.78 million baht has been proposed. Important features of the revised master plan include the following major work-plans:

1. **Work-Plan for Archaeological, Historical Research and Restoration of Monuments,** which would depend upon archaeological knowledge and preservation / restoration as the key procedures. Within this plan, the Nation Center for Restoration of Monument will be established.

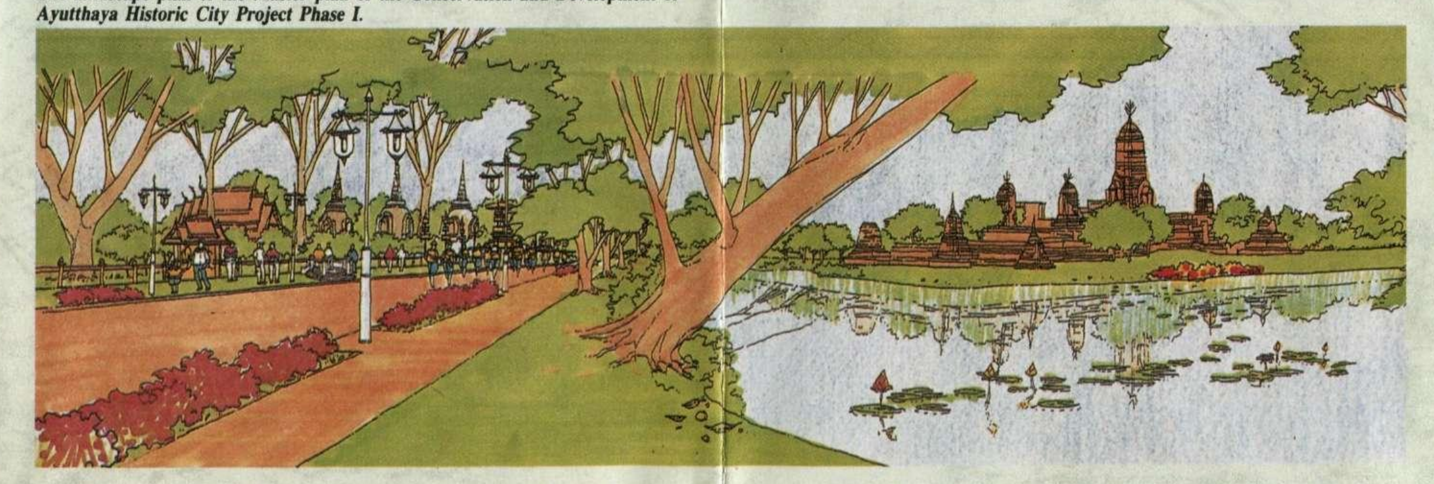
2. **Work-Plan for Development and Improvement of Infrastructure of the Historical City.** Its main activities include the rehabitation of ancient canal systems and providing more infrastructure such as electricity, water supply, telephone link, etc. among the present communities in the proposed area. All of these must be designed and constructed in harmony with an historical atmosphere of the city.





Small marble chedi found at Wat Chaiwattanaram.

Saint Josep church which was renovated in the Rattanakosin period.



The landscape plan of the Master plan of the Conservation and Development of Ayutthaya Historic City Project Phase I.

3. **Work-Plan for Restoration and Landscape Improvement of the Monuments.** The plan is to rectify all surrounding physical environments which create eye-sore and not in harmony with the atmosphere of Historic City.

4. **Work-Plan for the Development and Improvement of Residential Communities.** Such communities, in fact, create much lively atmosphere to the city, but some of those lying within or blocking the scenic views of the monuments and historical sites must be relocated in such way that appropriate and orderly harmonization could be achieved.



Phra Ubosod belonging to Wat Na Phra Meru which was restored in the late Ayutthaya Period.

5. **Work-Plan for the development of Headquarters and Personnel.** This is to constructed the headquarters building, to secure office facilities, to form working team adequatable for every aspect of the project work.

6. **Work-Plan for Academic and Tourism Services.** The plan is to establish an information center fully equipped with documents and other media making full use of new technology.

7. **Work-Plan for the Improvement of Socio-Economic of Local Residents.** The plan's effort must be made to promote earnings through various occupation activities related to tourism, together with the promotion of local arts and crafts through the development of an art-craft village.

8. **Work-Plan for the Relocation of Industrial Plants and Redevelopment of their terrain.** Industrial plants and factories are not in accord with the atmosphere of a historic city. Some of them are located in Rear Palace (Wang Lang) area. These must be relocated and the terrain properiy restored



The Gold elephant found in the treasure - house of Wat Rajaburana.

Burmese invaders in the year 1767, in the reign of King Ekatat (1758-1767), the last king. This caused the Thais to move further and re-established their new capital at Thonburi and steadfastly settled down at Bangkok up to present.

The Environmental of Ayutthaya Ancient City

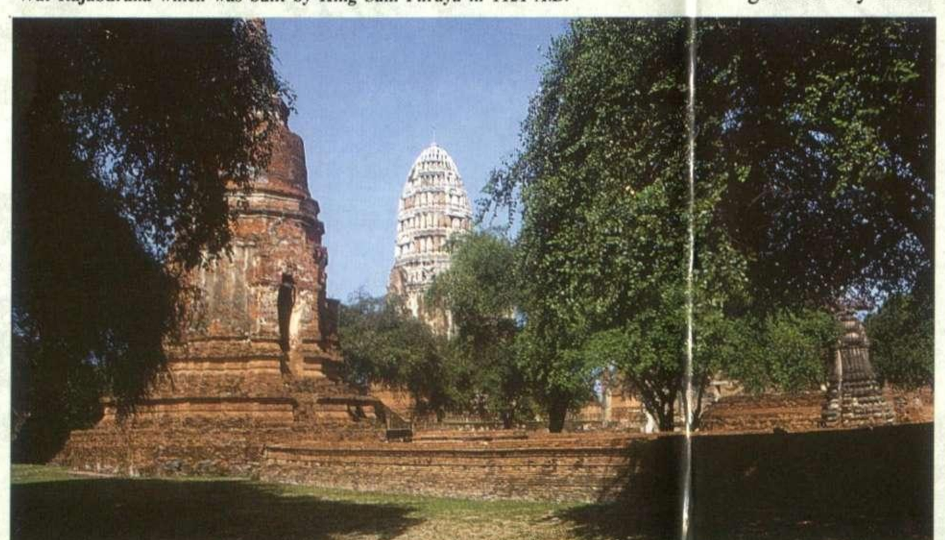
The heart of Ayutthaya is the island surrounded by rivers and city enclosure. The original city enclosure was firstly constructed of earth since 1350 and reconstructed of bricks in the reign of King Maha Chakrapat (1548-1568). Its dimension is 5 meter thick, 6 meter high and 12.5 km of total length. Supplement structures of the city enclosure composed of 16 forts and 99 gates including 18 main city entrances, 61 small gates, 20 water gates.

Ayutthaya is very well planned as riverine-base city caused by city planners who had experience and knowledge about its natural environments and phenomena. They preserve original waterways as much as possible and excavated more canals network connecting main rivers and canals in order to drain surplus water in the rainy season and to protect the city from inundating.

Canal networks that excavated throughout the city divided the city into blocks of land in which monasteries, communities, palaces and government buildings are located separately.

Basic infrastructures such as earth and brick roads were constructed parallel with canals. More than 30 bridges of varieties in structure, for example brick, wood, laterite and chain-suspension type were also constructed over canals in Ayutthaya City.

Wat Rajaburana which was built by King Sam Phraya in 1424 A.D.





The King's insignia which were found in the treasure - house of Wat Rajaburana.

Flood plains all around the city, facilitated by rivers and canals network is utilized for cultivation. Communities and villages associating with Buddhist monasteries are located along such waterways. The villages in Ayutthaya are background by field of rice beyond the horizon.

The Government Administration in Ayutthaya Period

Ayutthaya was ruled by the King in the absolute monarchy system. The King, with the most powerful in hand, empowered his relatives and officers to govern the principal and provincial towns far off the city. The dependent cities, on the other hand, being governed by their own rulers, were directly controlled by central government at Ayutthaya.

The Royal Palace : Center of Political Power and Government Administration

The Grand Palace is normally the living place for the King. The first royal palace constructing in the reign of King U-Thong was located at the present Wat Phra Si Sanphet. The palace was composed of 5 principal pavilions. All of these were probably constructed of wood. It is archived that they were fired in the year 1440, In the reign of King Borommatrai Lokanath, after the fire, new grand palace complex was constructed in the north and adjacent to the original area.

The old palace had been altered and served the religious utilization as the Lord Buddha's temple.

The Ayutthaya Society

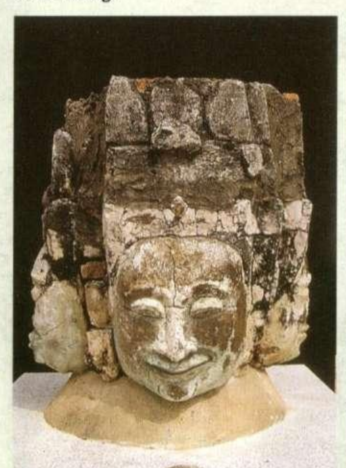
In Ayutthaya period the social system was divided into 3 status. firstly the classes consisted of the king whose the supermacy, secondly, the king relationship, the nobel man and the governor. The later group acted as the controller to the commoners and slaves.

The common man was the general person in the society whose under control by the aristocrat and working with the government office for 6 month per year. If they didn't want to work hard for along period, they can pay the money or things instead of, call **"Suoy"**.

The slave was the laborer whose look after by the nobel



The ruins of the Suriyas Amarin pavilion, Royal Palace, built in the reign of King Prasatthong.



Brahman - head which was placed at the top of the gate at the Royal palace.



Hinduism figures found during the excavation at the Hindu temple, Phraram lake.



Poddung (money in ancient time) which were found at the Royal palace.



Wat Phra Si Sanphet which was built in 1491 A.D. for the Royal ceremony.

man for lifelong. They came from various causes such as war, economy and by generation.

The Economy and Commercial

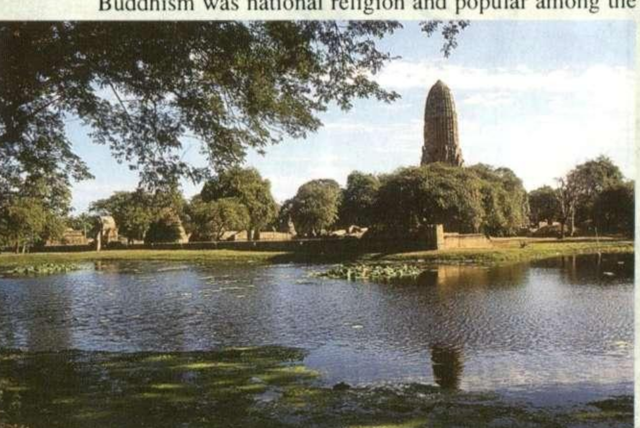
People of Ayutthaya were farmers. Rice was a major product which served people of the country for their daily food and surplus amount was exported to the world market.

As one of the trade centers of the world, as a middleman and monopolization on international maritime trade, these provided wealth of income and benefit to the government.

Major export commodities of Ayutthaya include primary agricultural products, ceramic wares, forest products such as ivory tusk, hide, log-wood, spices and minerals, etc.

The Religious of Ayutthaya People

Buddhism was national religion and popular among the



Wat Phra Ram, built by King Ramasuan in 1369 A.D.

people of Ayutthaya. Notwithstanding, the Kings profess and patronize Buddhism but they always presented permission to missionaries of Christian, Hinduism and Islamic for their liberty in propagation in this country.

The Architecture and Sculpture Relate to the Buddhism in Ayutthaya Period

Ayutthaya has its own style of arts exhibiting clearly in the form of architectures and sculptures. During an early phase (late 13th to 14th century), Ayutthaya arts represent characters of Khmer-Lopburi arts. Stupa of Prang shape is a unique architectural type of the period while Buddha images made of sandstone and bronze are the representatives of sculpture.

During the middle phase of Ayutthaya (15th-16th century), stupa of bell-shape were popularized and constructed as main structure of temples rather than Prang. In this period, new type of stupa so called the redented added-angled and the rabbeted-angled chedies which were developed from prang and bell-shape chedi. Buddha images made of lime stucco and bronze were abundant while sandstone group was decreased in numbers.



The stupa at Wat Worachet, constructed in 16 - 17 century A.D.



The stone Buddha Image at Wat Mahathat.



The image of crown Buddha was stood on Wat Na Phra Meru, dated to late Ayutthaya Period.

In the last phase (late 16th - 18th century), stupa of composite style from previous phase were favorite more than other type. Buddha images with crowned and ornamented decoration were constructed abundantly.

The Mural Painting in Ayutthaya Period

Fine arts particularly for paintings of Ayutthaya period are mostly deteriorated. Only few of mural paintings at cavern of stupa and in the viharas and chapel of temples have survived. These reflected not only decoration but also the believes and confidences in Buddhism of people of Ayutthaya.

Mural paintings from the early phase depicted scenes of the Former-Buddhas, the Sakayamuni Buddha's life and Jataka. Each scene is exhibited in rectangular frame separately with black, white, red and yellow as main colors.

Paintings of the 16th century, there still appear to be scenes of the Former-Buddhas, the Sakaya Buddha's life, rows of divinities. Only important scenes of the Buddha's life such as the great victory over mara and the events during 7 days after the great enlightenment were preferred and depicted. Apart from colors used in the early phase, green and pink were included during this phase. Fine lines were employed in order to make contrast and highlight details within the scene.

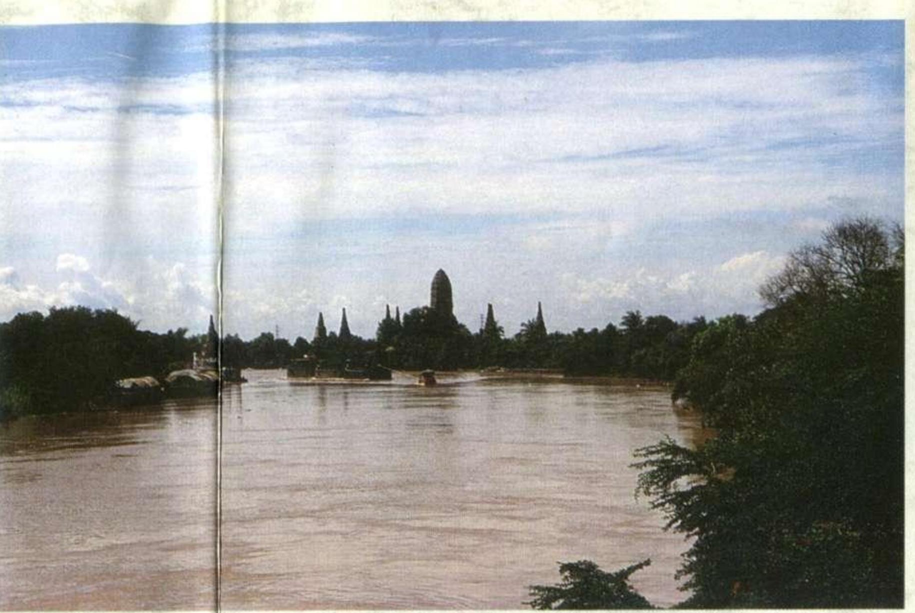
In the 17th century, scenes of Ten Lives of Buddha from Jataka were highlighted. The scene of the great victory over mara is the most important in the building while other scenes were minimized and seems to be inferior. In this phase, scenes from the



The Mural painting, by Chinese painter the early Ayutthaya period discovered at Wat Rajaburana.



The mural painting at Wat Rajaburana describing the story of the Buddha of the past, Ten Lives of the Buddha, and life of the historical Buddha.



Wat Chaiwattanaram was stood on the bank of Chao Phraya river.



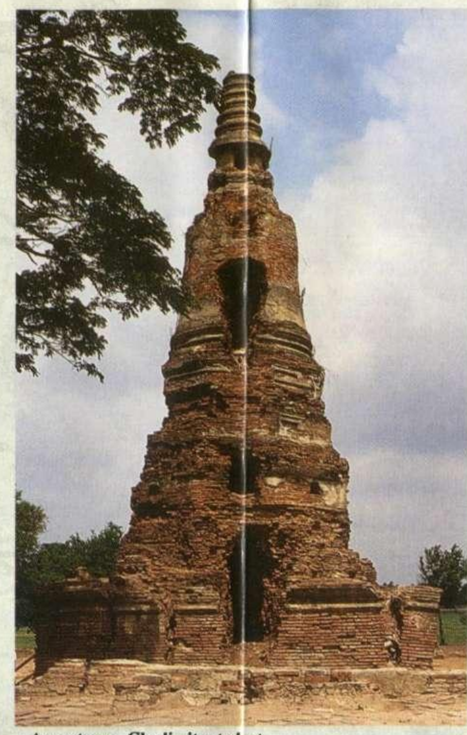
Wat Chaiwattanaram which was established in 1690 A.D. by King Prasatthong.

Traibhum (story of three worlds) had been introduced. Zigzag lines or Sinthao were used to separate each scene. Colors used in this phase are brighter than of the 16th century paintings.

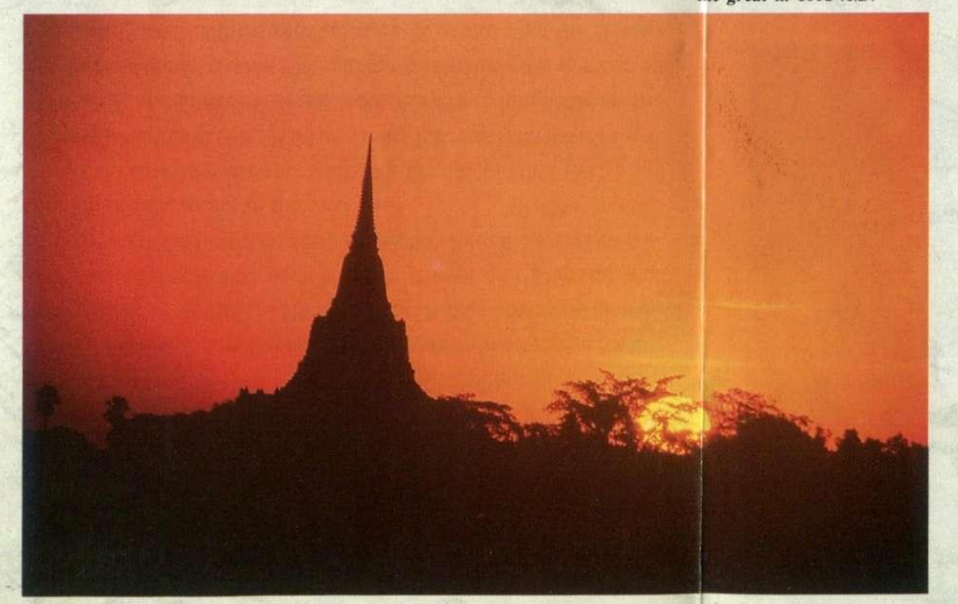
AYUTTHAYA : THE WORLD HERITAGE

The Historic City of Ayutthaya, with all of its remains, is considered to be cultural property of outstanding universal value and is listed as the World Heritage by UNESCO, on December 13, 1991 at Carthage, Tunisia, for the following reasons:

1. Ayutthaya represents a masterpiece of creative genius of perceptive selection of the location of a site to suit a complex scheme of site planning that capitalized the natural features of the typically Thai water-based settlement and culture to satisfy the demanding needs of the capital city to defend itself with the help of nature against enemy's attacks and to be blessed with an infrastructure system that would ensure its prosperity in peace time.



An octagon Chedi situated at Wat Sang Khatae, late Ayutthaya Period.



Wat Phu Kao Thong, probably constructed by King Narasuan the great in 1592 A.D.

2. The city plan of Ayutthaya exerted a decisive influence on Bangkok. In fact, Bangkok in its early years was Ayutthaya's resurrection in every aspect, including the structural arrangements, even the names of places, the unique houses, boat houses, royal barges and boats, and life styles.

3. The Historic City of Ayutthaya, and for what it was as a capital city, is distinctive and unique, and there is no historic city anywhere in Asia or any other parts of the world of its like.

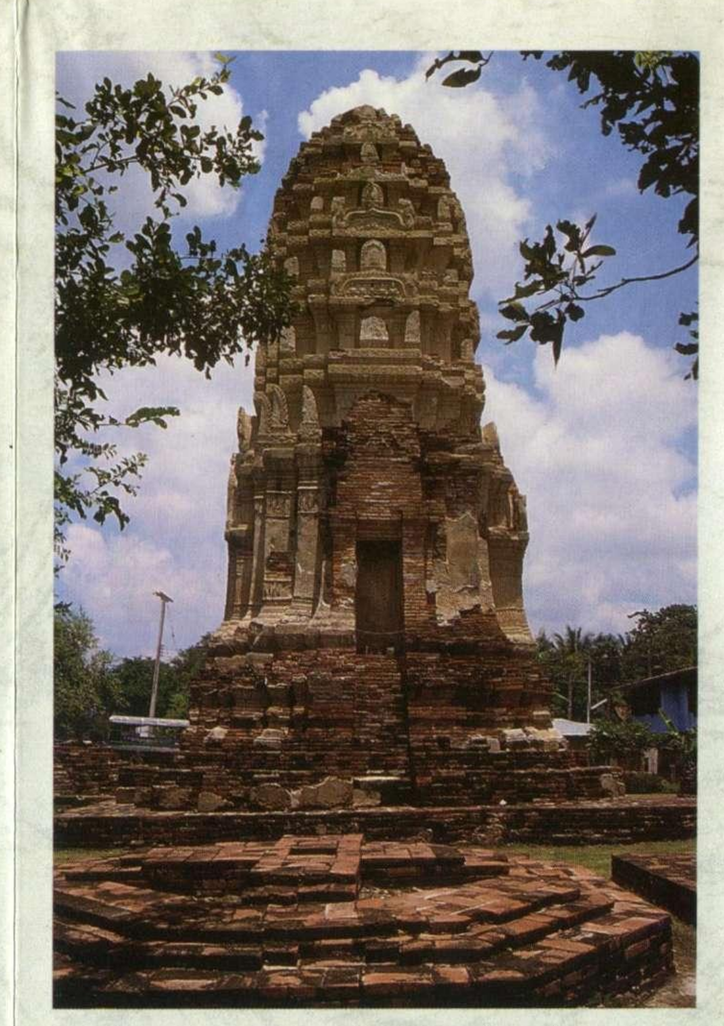
4. The monuments in Ayutthaya are unique and outstanding in architectural design of the region. Many structures such as chedi, prang, and prasat have the distinctive character and appearance which cannot be found alike anywhere else, through the origins were from an earlier period. The architectural design of Ayutthaya represents the continuation of architectural development irreplaceable now as a traditional Thai style.



Door panel from Wat Phra Si Sanphet.



Gold Ornaments found in treasure - house of Wat Rajaburana.



The main prang at Wat Som, an early Ayutthaya period architecture.

5. Architectures, paintings, and art objects of Ayutthaya associated to the nominated area are unique in their style, design, craftsmanship, materials, integrity and rarity.

They express ideas, beliefs, and creativity of Ayutthaya and of Thai people. They have also exerted influence in Cambodia and Laos.

Intangible cultural heritage property continues to exist to the present. Language, literature, music, dancing, sports, cultural entertainment, manner and family relationship, cuisine, handicrafts, festivals, and ceremonies are still practiced today.

Plan showing important religious monuments within and outside the island.

1 A complex of the Royal Palace
2 Wat Phra Si Sanphet
3 Viharn Phra Mongkhon Bophit
4 Wat Lokayasutha
5 Wat Chettharam
6 Wat Phlabphlachai
7 Wat Ratpraditsathan
8 Wat Senatsanaram
9 Wat Mahathat
10 Wat Ratcha Burana
11 Wat Phra Ram
12 Wat Khunmuangchai
13 Chan Kasem Palace

Office of Ayutthaya Historic City Project
Fine Arts Department

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An old map of Ayutthaya, drafted by Johannes Vingboons in 1665 A.D.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Khrung Si Ayutthaya or Ayutthaya, is nestled on an island at the junction of the Chao Phraya, Lopburi and Pasak rivers in lower central Thailand. The land of this region is fertile with soils suitable for rice culture. Its river systems facilitated internal and international communication and transportation, and served Ayutthaya as a commercial and trade center of Asian region and the world .

Prior to the establishment of Ayutthaya at mid 14th century, there are numbers of independent city-states locating in present Thailand, for instance, Lanna and Sukhothai in the north and Nakhon Si Thammarat in the south. During that period, political and cultural power of Khmer were superior to the area in northeast and central Thailand and was centralized at Lopburi. Historians believe that Ayutthaya had been a border town of Lopburi and located at the area east of present Ayutthaya island, known as "Muang Ayothaya".

Most of dependencies in Mainland Southeast Asia declared their independence when the Khmer Empire declined in the 13th century. Soon after that, in the year 1350, King Ramathibodi I or Phra Chao U-Thong (1350-1369), was empowered by his relative cities such as Suphanburi, Lopburi and Sanburi, to establish Ayutthaya as a new capital of central Thai.

Later on, Ayutthaya developed the country, expanded her territory and played as the great capital of Thailand for the period of 417 years. There were 33 kings from 5 dynasties ruling the country. Ayutthaya was invaded and absolutely destroyed by